

**MINUTES**  
**New Castle City Planning Commission**  
**Parking Study Sub-Committee Meeting**  
**January 23, 2014 – 4 p.m.**  
**City of New Castle Town Hall**

Members Present: Dr. Joanne Viola, Chair  
Jonathan Justice  
Gail Seitz  
Jim Vincent  
Tom Whitehead

Members Absent: Lt. Adam Brams  
Andrew Hayes  
Heather Dunigan, WILMAPCO  
Albert Vannucci

Dr. Viola called the meeting to order.

**Minutes** – A motion was made and seconded to approve the minutes of the 11/21/13 meeting. Motion approved.

**Communications** – Two communications were discussed. The first addresses what the committee sees as the process for review of its recommendations. It was sent to the City Council President, City Administrator, and Planning Commission Chair. (*Copies distributed to group.*) The City Council President and City Administrator communicated to Dr. Viola that the committee's job is to determine priority issues and pass on to the Planning Commission. The Planning Commission will then review and develop parking recommendations, suggest a workshop, if needed, and submit recommendations to City Council. City Council will address via public workshops and special council meetings that are open to public. Ordinance changes could result from this committee's recommendations. Two Council meetings are required for ordinance changes.

The second communication is information that Lt. Brams provided to City Administrator Barthel about curbs in need of painting. Administrator Barthel is reviewing the information with Council members and police and will inform this committee of their actions. The information includes outlying areas as well as the historic district, and will be prioritized.

**OLD BUSINESS**

Two recommendations to be submitted to the Planning Commission were discussed.

***Recommendation #1 – Ferry Cut-Off (Chestnut and Fourth Streets) City Lot parking concept recommendation.***

The City has removed the recycle bins from the Ferry Cut-Off area. City Council has been requested to submit proposals to secure funding through federal land access grants that the National Park Service has recommended. A concept plan for use of the Ferry Cut-Off as a parking area for visitors and buses was discussed. The plan would be separated into two phases. The first phase would propose the following:

- Designate the parking area the Broad Dyke City Parking Area,
- Place directional signage for visitors to guide to the parking area and historic area,

- Space for electric car charger installation and bicycle parking,
- Lighting and street scape landscaping.

*(A drawing of the area was distributed to the group.)*

The second phase deals with the need for more visitors parking, which is available at Ferry Cut-Off. The group discussed different surfaces for the area including reinforced turf parking that is made of construction materials (plastic, concrete) and incorporated in the grass to provide added support for the grass. Landscaping would be needed. Bike parking was suggested. It is unknown what, if any, permits would be required.

Mr. Whitehead does not support the additional parking (second phase) recommendation. He prefers the area behind the M&T Bank (downtown) near the tennis courts.

Dr. Viola said only the first phase will be considered at this time. The City has expressed interest in moving forward with it. The second phase would be discussed further at a later date. Bus parking may need to stay in the Ferry Cut-Off area.

The National Park Service has indicated that the second phase is not something they care to pursue and would rather have additional parking closer to the downtown area.

***Recommendation #2 -- Safety of school bus drop-offs at Battery Park***

Discussion included looking at bus drop off point to be closer to Battery Park rather than downtown or the wharf area. Councilman Vannucci talked to the Good Will Fire Co. Board of Directors about buses utilizing the South Street area. Good Will's Board recommends that school buses be added to the City gathering permit process (currently be redone by City) and have the buses drop children off near the fire house and walk to Battery Park, then the bus would go to Fourth Street to park. It was also suggested that police support would be added to the permit process based on volume. The City would communicate the process to be used to school districts. Schools would be exempt from gathering permit fees.

A flowchart was requested to guide the committee and avoid redundancy by various groups in the City.

Some other parking areas in need of improvement belong to the Trustees of the New Castle Common. When "Trust" land is involved they should be consulted before taking recommendations to the Planning Commission.

**A motion was made and seconded to bring two recommendations to the Planning Commission for an improvement of the Ferry Cut-Off/Broad Dyke City parking area to include additional spaces for visitor and bus parking, lighting and signage as appropriate, and landscaping as well as an electric car charging concept and bicycle parking. The second recommendation is that the City pursue implementation of school bus drops at Battery Park to be communicated to the schools, that they bring buses down South Street, drop off at Fourth Street, and proceed to park in the Broad Dyke lot, and that they be added to the City permit process and communicate to**

**school districts and anyone applying for gathering permits will also see directions on the City website, permit fees associated with schools be waived, and a provision made for large groups to have City police provide assistance.**

Mr. Whitehead does not support the first phase without indicating a maximum number of parking spaces of 45 in perpetuity. *(Brief discussion followed.)*

**Motion approved by a vote of 4 in favor and 1 against (Whitehead).**

#### New Business

Dr. Viola presented two issues for consideration.

- Residential permits and parking issues – Selected streets to be evaluated for residential-only parking and directional signage. The latter is an issue being addressed by the Way Finding Committee.
- Consider mixed-use, residential and visitor parking as follows: residents parking that visitors may use in the daytime, but no overnight parking in those lots. Mr. Whitehead described how Marcus Hook, Pennsylvania has addressed this issue. Some of the lots to be considered for mixed-use parking include Fort Casimir, Bull Hill, and best use of available space off Third Street.

Use the parking inventory done by the committee to line off streets and present to the Planning Commission for their consideration. Develop concept plans for Fort Casimir lot and M&T Bank area.

The City will apply for federal land access program funding that guarantees that public parks and national monuments have adequate access to the site. Current plans revolve around Battery Park.

Way Finding & Signage – Ms. Seitz gave a brief update. *(Drawings of signage and posts distributed.)* Mitchell Associates will do the signage design and Hoopty Do Signs will produce the signs. With remaining monies the following projects are planned: six maps to be located at the corner of the Sheriff's House and court house, in front of City offices, in front of library, wharf entrance to Battery Park, and two in parking areas. One vehicular directional sign will be placed on Delaware Street going towards downtown, and five parking lot identification signs for existing lots (Battery Park, Third Street parking, wharf area, Fort Casimir, and at the lot at Ferry Cut-off). Multiple directional signs will be placed for the Battery Park and Third Street parking lots. Ornamental base and masonry will be purchased for the court house map and wood posts and installation hardware for other signs. The Trustees of the New Castle Common will pay for and install Battery Park rules signs in the park. Municipal Services Commission will handle mounts on the lamp posts.

Mr. Vincent inquired whether any manpower predictions have been made for police enforcement. Dr. Viola said that will be a City responsibility. Appropriate enforcement of any ordinance(s) this body might recommend to Planning Committee is important.

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There being no further business to discuss the meeting was adjourned at 5:33 p.m.

Debbie Turner  
Stenographer

*(Stenographer not present at meeting; minutes prepared from recording.)*